

Teaford, Jon C. *Post-Suburbia. Government and Politics in the Edge Cities*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. 242 pp. ISBN 0-8018-5450-4. U.S.\$32.50 (hardcover)

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drive who eventually hired black professionals with the technical skills necessary for success. In the decade following World War II the company was reorganized, offered new life insurance products as well as home mortgages, and developed a departmental administrative structure. Weems shows how Metropolitan's phenomenal growth provided important white collar employment opportunities for black agents and managers who would not have been hired by white companies. Although female employees were confined to clerical positions during the period, even these jobs were welcome alternatives to domestic service. Weems demonstrates how the uniqueness of this enterprise, coupled with great reliance on internal promotion and company paternalism, produced a corporate culture in which employees shared a "special sense of pride and collective mission."

Presidents such as Robert Cole were not motivated merely by profits, but believed that Chicago Metropolitan was responsible for improving the quality of life in Chicago's "Bronzeville." In 1940 its corporate headquarters was constructed in the center of the South Side's business district. With state of the art offices on the main floor and an elegant ballroom on the second floor, to be used for stylish community and business affairs, this facility was recognized as the symbol of black success. Metropolitan facilities and funds were used to establish a studio which broadcast one of the earliest black radio programs produced with an all black technical staff. The *Bronzeman*, a magazine with a focus on black affairs, maintained offices on the Metropolitan property. Robert Cole also purchased the moribund Chicago American Giants of the Negro Baseball League in 1932, provided upgraded playing facilities, and the capital to restore the team to league contention. Cole and his successors also vigorously supported the local Y.M.C.A. and the N.A.A.C.P. The author asserts that it was the availability of these and other organizations and activities which helped migrants adjust to the city.

While the main thrust of *Black Business in the Black Metropolis* focuses on corporate success, this study is also about corporate demise, and Weems convincingly argues that racial integration contributed substantially to the downfall of Chicago Metropolitan. In the 1950s, the large mainstream insurance companies which never completely abandoned the black market aggressively sought and won black clients. They likewise succeeded in their pursuit of black agents who were valued for their professional training and experience, as well as their knowledge of the black community. Weems poignantly observes that racial integration was a "one-way street" because black insurers failed to attract white clients or employees. By the 1980s, the effects of Chicago Metropolitan's eroding market share were further aggravated by declining premium income, high unemployment in the black community and rising mortgage defaults. In 1990 to avoid dissolution it was acquired by Atlanta Life Insurance Company, another black corporation.

Mortgage lending was central to this company, but in a book about the role of black business in the black community, Profes-

sor Weems pays little attention to the way Chicago Metropolitan's loan program affected the physical growth or redevelopment of black neighborhoods. Nor do we learn much about the financial operation of the company. The author does provide a static profile of its securities portfolio for 1989 but a more detailed and sustained analysis of its holdings through time, to consider return on investment might have been valuable. Nevertheless this work contains important insights into Chicago's black community and is a welcome addition to the literature on a form of black entrepreneurship which is disappearing all too rapidly.

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Teaford, Jon C. *Post-Suburbia. Government and Politics in the Edge Cities*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. 242 pp. ISBN 0-8018-5450-4. U.S.\$32.50 (hardcover)

Jon Teaford has written several synthetic narratives about metropolitan America, focussing especially upon city government. In his latest work he focusses upon the emergence and governance of what are most widely known as Edge Cities. Many people have written about these new fringe centres of employment and retailing but, Teaford suggests, few have said much about their management, while most have viewed them as of very recent origin. In this context, Teaford attempts to strengthen our understanding of Edge City government while offering greater historical depth. The goal is worthwhile; the result disappointing.

Teaford's method is to examine six counties in five metropolitan areas: New York (2 counties), together with Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis (1 each). He chose the counties (Suffolk, Nassau, Orange, Oakland, Du Page, and St. Louis, respectively) to provide wide regional scope (except for the south), and because he believes that they were among the first to see this new type of fringe development. In each case, he has traced the development of local politics through local newspapers. His footnotes show that he has relied heavily on the likes of the *Royal Oak Tribune*, the *Naperville Sun*, and the *Orange County Register*. He weaves together the experiences of his six counties within a chronological narrative.

As he sees it, suburbs of the early twentieth century were middle (or upper) class "havens" from the bustle of the city. In the postwar period, however, the decentralization of employment into discreetly labelled industrial "parks" created places where people could both live and work. The construction of shopping centres then made these places almost entirely self-sufficient, at least for basic needs. In this context, he traces the emergence of various attempts to provide suburban government. As suburbs beat back growing pressures for metropolitan government, counties took on a more powerful role. Special

service districts were formed, as well as municipal leagues. While suburbs resisted suggestions that service districts might include central cities, they were willing to cooperate among themselves. The adaptation of, especially, county government to suit changing needs was, as Teaford puts it, a struggle. It involved a delicate balancing act, on the one hand attracting and accepting offices and industry in order to bolster the tax base, and on the other holding back the tide of development so as not to destroy too much open space, or the small-scale and residentially homogeneous character of the suburbs. The result in Teaford's view was no mean achievement: county residents "fashioned organs of local government for the world of the future." (p. 8)

Although the title of the book sounds contemporary, Teaford's account is surprisingly dated. It takes little account of important developments in both the design and management of suburbs, and also in their historiography. In terms of design he ignores the so-called New Urbanism. The latter has been hyped excessively, but it surely should be fitted into the story. Are these denser and more intimate forms of development proof of the persistence of the village ethos, or are they a sign that the 'burbs are finally becoming urbane? More importantly, Teaford glosses over the new forms of shadow government, notably homeowner associations. In one sense they fit his thesis about the importance of intimacy and homogeneity, but they clearly undermine the significance of county, and indeed any type of, conventional government. For enlightenment on this rapidly-emerging subject one must turn elsewhere, to Joel Garreau, Mike Davis, and above all Gavin McKenzie's *Privatopia*.

Teaford's understanding of the history and modern historiography of suburban development is also outdated. Pre-WWII suburbs were not all affluent havens, and many contained a good deal of employment. Contemporaries, notably Graham Taylor, Harlan Douglass, and Chauncy Harris knew this very well. If a postwar generation of urban historians temporarily managed to forget the fact, more recent writers have rediscovered it. In part, the gaps and imbalances in Teaford's account reflect his decision to focus on the most affluent counties in each metropolitan area, and within that context to give greatest emphasis to those portions that were incorporated (which were the most likely to be affluent). In part, however, he simply seems to be out of touch with recent scholarship to which, incidentally, he makes only the briefest of references. (His short 'bibliographic essay' makes no reference to the work of Ken Jackson!)

Perhaps the underlying problem is that Teaford, like Garreau, is simply not sufficiently critical. Relying heavily on local newspapers he constructs a boosterish account of struggles and achievements. Unlike Garreau, he does not even broach the question as to what effects the strategies of county residents might have had on the residents of cities, or of less affluent counties. He hardly alludes (p. 122) to the possibility that suburban governments were designed to be socially exclusive,

both on the basis of income and race. (There are no index entries for "race", "blacks", or "African-Americans".) Although one of his chosen counties is St. Louis, he ignores Ken Jackson's seminal research there, which demonstrated the impact of racially-exclusionary policies of the Federal Housing Administration. This is a white-wash.

Teaford has provided some historical depth to current debates about Edge Cities. His locally rooted narrative provides a fuller account than previously available as to how the governments of affluent counties have typically evolved. But his account is incomplete and uncritical. This book should come with a warning: read with care.

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Lindner, Rolf. *The Reportage of Urban Culture: Robert Park and the Chicago School*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. xiv, 237, 6 black and white plates, bibliography, index. \$54.95 (cloth).

The essence of the Chicago School of Sociology, as it developed under the leadership of Robert Park in the 1920s, was "nosing around." Using the language of journalism, it encompassed the art of seeing the city as it is, not as we would like it to be. This, indeed, represented the beginning of the "naturalistic tradition" in sociology.

Rolf Lindner seeks to demonstrate how the emergence of the "New Journalism" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries shaped the Chicago School. Mass-circulation newspapers responded to the growth of large cities. A fundamental change in the nature of the press involved the definition of what was "newsworthy": big city life in itself, that which was unusual, different, all became now the focus of attention. The goal of urban journalism was not to seek moral reform, but to expose, uncover, illuminate. Big city reportage, Lindner persuasively argues, planted the basic seeds of urban sociological research. Investigative reporting, portraying the inside of an unfamiliar world, served as a fruitful model for the early development of a "realistic sociology."

Park's own career as a journalist, prior to his appointment at the University of Chicago, was certainly influential in developing his view of what sociology was to be. As an urban journalist, he had already begun to approach the city as a social laboratory. The "art of looking" is essential for acquiring knowledge. Reflecting the influence as well of William James, Park was committed to the notion of "learning by experience," of the development of concepts from experience. "Acquaintance with" some social institution or social phenomenon must always precede